

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 197934

STADIS/////////////////
FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM LANDE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER

1. INDIAN AMBASSADOR WILL BE CALLING ON DEPUTY SECRETARY
NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER
VAJPAYEE SEPTEMBER 29-30. AS YOU KNOW, THIS POSSIBILITY
WAS FIRST RAISED BEFORE WE KNEW THAT THE PRIME MINISTER
WOULD BE VISITING WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER. THE QUESTION
ARISES WHETHER SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE UNDER THE
NEW CIRCUMSTANCES OR WHETHER A FOREIGN MINISTER MEETING
WITH THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK FOLLOWED PERHAPS BY THE
FOREIGN MINISTER ACCOMPANYING THE PRIME MINISTER IN LATE
OCTOBER TO WASHINGTON WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE. OTHER
FACTORS THAT WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION ARE
THAT A VAJPAYEE MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WILL BE IM-
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POSSIBLE, A MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT UNLIKELY, AND
A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON IMPOSSIBLE SINCE
THE SECRETARY WILL BE IN NEW YORK.

2. DESPITE THE ABOVE FACTORS, OUR INITIAL INCLINATION IS
TO TAKE THE POSITION WITH THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR THAT THIS

DECISION IS UP TO THE GOI. IF VAJPAYEE WANTS TO COME TO WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 29-30, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY WILL BE HAPPY TO SEE HIM AND WE WILL TRY TO SET UP WHATEVER ADDI-

TIONAL MEETINGS ARE POSSIBLE. AS TO OTHER PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES, WE AND THE INDIAN EMBASSY HAVE TALKED ABOUT APPEARANCES BEFORE THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES. WHETHER THIS WOULD BE SEEN AS UPSTAGING POSSIBLE CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS BY THE P.M. AGAIN IS A DECISION THAT WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY THE GOI.

3. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS PROPOSED POSITION AS WELL AS ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU CAN GIVE US ON GOI THINKING. WE ASSUME THAT ANY DECISION TAKEN ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT WILL HAVE BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. SHOULD WE BE CONFIDENT ABOUT THIS ASSUMPTION? WHILE A VAJPAYEE VISIT ON THE SUGGESTED DATES COULD BE BILLED AS A PREPARATORY VISIT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW ANYTHING OF A SUBSTANTIVE NATURE COULD USEFULLY BE ACCOMPLISHED. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE AWARE THAT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO DEVELOP A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH VAJPAYEE. HAS ANY THOUGHT BEEN GIVEN TO WHO WOULD ACCOMPANY THE PRIME MINISTER TO WASHINGTON? SHOULD WE ASSUME THAT VAJPAYEE WILL ACCOMPANY DESAI WHETHER OR NOT THE EARLIER VISIT TAKES PLACE? WE LEAVE TO YOU THE DECISION WHETHER YOU WISH TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM WITH THE GOI BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS SUBJECT
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ASAP IN THIS CHANNEL. VANCE

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